

REMARKS

Claims 1-15, 17, 18, 20-22, and 24-28 are pending.

Claims 27 and 28 stand withdrawn as non-elected and are hereby cancelled without prejudice for presentation in a divisional application.

Claims 1-15, 17, 18 20-22, and 26 are allowed.

Claim 25 is rejected.

Claim 24 is objected to.

Claims 25 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph.

Claims 24 and 25 are amended.

No new matter is added.

Applicant requests reconsideration and allowance of the claims in light of the above amendments and following remarks.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicant thanks the Examiner for indicating that Claims 1-15, 17, 18 and 20-22 are allowed.

Claim Objections

Claim 24 is objected to because of the following informalities:

Line 1-2, the phrase “the material barrier layer” has no antecedent basis.

Claim 24 is amended to provide a proper antecedent basis using layer identification consistent with claim 22 from which it is dependent. Accordingly, claim 24 is believed to be allowable and allowance is respectfully requested.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 25 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

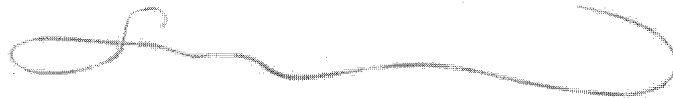
Claim 25 has been amended to clarify that the thermal oxide layer is formed using O₂, N₂O or a combination thereof, as indicated in the specification page 5, lines 10 and 11. Accordingly, claim 25 is believed to be allowable and allowance is respectfully requested.

Conclusion

For the foregoing reasons, reconsideration and allowance of all of the claims of the application as amended is requested. The Examiner is encouraged to telephone the undersigned at (503) 222-3613 if it appears that an interview would be helpful in advancing the case.

Respectfully submitted,

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